

PRESS RELEASE

Austin Eddy
Crossing the Bar

July 23 – August 28, 2022
Opening on Saturday, July 23, 7 – 10 pm
KASTRO, 840 07 Antiparos

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is delighted to present *Crossing the Bar*, the gallery's second exhibition with the American artist Austin Eddy, who was recently the subject of a solo presentation at Eva Presenhuber's showroom in New York. *Crossing the Bar* is the gallery's eighth summer exhibition at Kastro, Antiparos.

Austin Eddy's paintings quietly circle the subject of death. Temporality and fragility appear as simplified, semi-abstract representations: birds and bird pairs perched on seaside sand bars—symbols of the ephemeral and the transitional, just as the seas' ebb and flow stand for the coming and going to which our lives and our loves are ultimately also subject. Eddy has called his exhibition *Crossing the Bar*, a title that refers to an 1889 poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson in which the tides become a metaphor for goodbyes and departures. "Twilight and evening bell"—that is the feeling the artist evokes in his images, which at first glance seem so elated.

Though always autobiographical in nature, Eddy's work is not illustrative; it tells no concrete stories. Instead of narrative, the paintings and drawings exude a lyricism that is hard to pin down: calm yet playful, contoured yet open, bright yet muted. His motifs edge so close to abstraction that only their basics stick in our minds, there becoming what we make of them: the bird, the sea, the moon, the sun, the circle, the stripe, the red, the blue, the pink, the purple. Eddy's paintings celebrate the moment, fully aware of its fleetingness between past and future. Here, amidst the meditative hieroglyphics that form the basis of his paintings, reality only appears to signal its own transience. The simplicity and repetition of Eddy's bird, land, and sea motifs have a comforting quality: they remind us that our personal experience of mortality is truly a universal one. It is not just the individual who is affected, but all humans; our shared destiny is what connects us.

Drawing, painting, and poetry have always been more important to Eddy than prose. Describing thoughts and feelings in images rather than sentences, with allusions rather than illustrations, is his preferred means of expression. "Poetry allowed me to see that things don't have to be so specific in order to create a sense of beauty or a relationship," he says. And it is this combination of clarity and suggestion, of silence and precision, that effects a melancholy, which eventually spreads its wings—a bird soaring over the sea, its destination unknown to us.

Situated in the art history of Modernism, Eddy's pictorial language is obviously reminiscent of Cubism, Matisse, and Picasso, but the actual foundation of his painting is the Folk Art that entered domestic life in the middle of the 20th century: simple utilitarian objects such as vases, plates, and cups suddenly exhibited naive motifs reminiscent of Sunday painters, who used archaic forms intuitively rather than conceptually, coming from a deeply human urge to decorate that is as guileless as it is innocent.

Eddy's childhood and adolescence were shaped by the visual worlds of comics, cartoons, and album covers—impressions that he processed and refined during his studies at the Art Institute of Chicago. As a student of Barbara Rossi, who belonged to the Chicago Imagists in the 1960s, the deconstruction of everyday things into countless shapes and colors became central to his work. The Chicago Imagists' cartoonishly distorted and deconstructed images thus laid the foundation for Eddy's approach to painting. Though his work initially became more and more abstract, it finally found its poetic expression in figurative motifs that cannot help but touch us at first glance, inspire flights of fancy, and carry us away as if on gentle waves.

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER

Austin Eddy was born in 1986 in Boston, MA, US, and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US. He earned his BFA in Painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2010. Eddy is the subject of a solo exhibition titled *Sad Landscapes* at Le Consortium, Académie Conti, La Romanée Conti, Dijon, from July 2 to October 9, 2022. Recent exhibitions include *Above the House Where Paul Verlaine Died*, 12.26, Dallas, TX, US (2021); *Selected Poems*, Eva Presenhuber, Private Showroom, New York, NY, US (2021); *As The Crow Flies*, Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, CO, US (2020); *A Place For Dreams*, Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US (2020); *Seeuferweg*, Livie Fine Art, Zurich, CH (2021); *Birds At Night*, Althuis Hofland Fine Arts, Amsterdam, NL (2020); and *The Poet And The Muse*, Knust Kunz, Munich, DE (2020). Later this year, a monograph of the artist's practice will be published in conjunction with Knust Kunz, Munich.

For further information, please contact our sales team (onlinesales@presenhuber.com).